DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 395 RC 019 417

TITLE	Journal of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE), 1993.
INSTITUTION	Assembly of Rural Teachers of English.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	19p.; Published annually.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Journal of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE); 1993
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Book Reviews; *Educational Change; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Local History; Reading Instruction; Role of Education; *Rural Education; *Rural Schools; *Small Schools; Student Projects; Teaching Methods; Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS	Marginality

ABSTRACT

The 1993 issue of this annual journal contains five articles about rural education by rural English teachers. "Rural: The Only Place To Be" (Craig Akey) speaks of a personal commitment to rural education, presents examples of prose and poetry by junior and senior high school students in an innovative "outdoor literature" course, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the small school, and describes how one small school has overcome the disadvantages of smallness through innovative technology and the team approach. "Teaching Scientific Vocabulary: A Joint Venture for Rural Schools" (V. Pauline Hodges) describes methods of scientific vocabulary development for students who have difficulty reading. "A Medley of Writings" (Beth Hunnicutt) contains four short pieces: a personal narrative about the joy of fishing with one's extended family, a discussion of why rural teachers must reject rural marginalization for themselves and their students, a book review of "Dreamers and Desperadoes" (Craig Lesley and Katheryn Stavrakis, eds.), and descriptions of three books with female protagonists for young people. "A Community-History Project" (Marilyn Smith) describes a senior class project on local history. "Winning for the Small Schools" (Nathan James Weate) discusses the role that rural communities can play in improving American life and the role that rural schools can play in the restructuring of American education. (SV)

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ED 364 395

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FOREWORD

On the following pages are writings by five authors. What all these writings have in common is that they are about rural education by rural school teachers.

The writings are arranged in alphabetical order of authors' last names for lack of any better system by which to arrange them.

Craig Akey speaks of his commitment to rural education in the opening piece and shares some of his students' poetry and prose.

V. Pauline Hodges tells of a way rural students who have difficulty reading can be helped with their science assignments. And, of course, the principles have carryover into other subjects.

Beth Hunnicutt has several short pieces about rural education which have been placed into a "medley" of writings.

Marilyn Smith describes a community-history project she uses with her students in Ithaca (Michigan) High School.

Jim Weate speaks of the role small, rural schools can play in the restructuring movement presently affecting American education.

Thanks to the writers and thanks to the readers of this journal for their parts in this professional interchange of ideas.

The ***Journal of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE)*** is published once each year by the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE). ARTE is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, headquartered at 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

The ***Journal of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE)*** is distributed to all members of ARTE.

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Rural: the Only Place to Be

by Craig Akey
Clintonville High School
Clintonville, Wisconsin

$10,000. I've heard that figure dozens of times in the last several years of teaching at Clintonville High School, a 10-12 school of 380 students. "You could make another $10,000 if you came to Appleton or Green Bay." Well, I could use the money of course but the trade offs--what are the trade offs? Because I am where I am, I develop my own courses, have control over course content, have immediate access to any administrator, have resources available without bureaucracy, am allowed travel to help bring ideas to our school Much of this advantage results from the philosophy of our school's leadership. However, much is due to the fact that I am in a rural school.

In a small school there is no anonymity. The advantage to this is that it keeps everyone honest and accountable. That may be one reason I was able to develop an elective English class for juniors and seniors, "Outdoor Literature." If it developed as a class that didn't meet the reading and writing standards our district expected, I knew the class would be dropped. The class, while appropriate for all students, was designed for those who did not plan to continue their education. We read novels, short stories, poetry, news articles, essays; in short, the same literature types expected in any English class. And we write. Lots!

Novels were selected for an important theme and supplemented by short fiction of a similar thematic nature. One novel choice, Allan Eckert's ***The Silent Sky*** (Landfall Press, 1965), is a narrative describing the extinction of the passenger pigeon. The book is also of interest to students in Wisconsin because one flock's migration is traced through Wisconsin to its nesting ground in the north central part of the state. The novel leads to discussions and other readings about endangered species. In addition to writing an essay explaining the causes of this species' extinction, students write bio-poems, using the passenger pigeon as the main character. Following are two examples:

Passenger
Careless, amusing, graceful
Sibling of a squab
Lover of beechnuts, warm weather, beautiful hen
Who feels strong when his crop is full,
weak when it is empty
Lonely when he has no companion,
Who needs a companion, food, water
Who gives man some quick money, predators food,
and the sky darkness
Who fears raccoons, bobcats,
and the onslaught of man
Who would like to see the end of killings,
companions, clear skies
Resident of James Bay to Florida
Pigeon
--Ernesto Acevedo

Passenger,
Fast, streamlined, small and colorful,
Brother of Martha,
Lover of flying in large numbers,
eating various foods and being
in the lead position in the flocks,
Who feels happy when flying, contented when full
but no compassion for dead or dying birds,
Who needs the security of its own kind,
the sound of the thunderous wingbeats
and protection from extinction,
Who fears being away from other passenger
pigeons, predators, and man,
Who would like to see his own kind
back in flocks the size they once were,
his dark male companion and no more
mass slaughters of his kind,
Resident of James Bay to Florida,
Pigeon
--Steve Nachtrab

The theme also lead to another writing exercise, the letter. Each student was to select a state and write to its Natural Resources division, requesting information regarding rare and endangered species in that particular state. Letters were sent through school mail and responses added to our knowledge and discussion.

Naturalist Roger Caras provides the most popular course novel, ***Monarch of Deadman Bay*** (University of Nebraska Press, 1990). There are several themes in the novel, but we concentrate on one dealing with hunter ethics. Four different hunters come to kill the Kodiak bear and each has a distinct personality. Since hunting is an important aspect in our rural setting, the values that each character in the novel portray becomes meaningful in relation to the values of those who hunt in our country.

For a letter writing activity, students look in an outdoor magazine and write for information about a hunting or fishing trip. Some write to Kodiak Island for the latest bear hunting trip costs and regulations.

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Also, a character in the novel provided another idea. Caras writes of a professional hunter, "It was the killing he came for, not the communion with the great outdoors." Students listed what they liked about an outdoor sport. If it were hunting, they could not include the kill. Their lists were then revised into poems with an emphasis on beginning line variation.

The Hunt

Excitement of the upcoming season.
Shotgun sighted in to perfection.
Tree stands scatters throughout the woods.
Shine of a finely polished weapon.
Long drives.
Sitting in my stand freezing to death while
waiting for deer.
Drinking beer.
Catch the B-3 that floats around.
Being with friends.
No Thanksgiving dinner with the relatives.
Wet feet.
Rain and snow.
Crowded cars.
Bad shells.
Shooting trees you swear were deer.
Guessing the weights.
Admiring the big bucks.
Solitarity.
--Gary Zimmerman

Things I Like about Downhill Skiing

The great speed.
Flying high over a jump.
Lighting on a cool winter night.
Trying new and daring tricks.
Having a Chinese down hill
Girls that you find at a ski hill.
Wind in my face while I'm just cruising.
The smell in the air of a calm cool night.
Thrills and chills of wiping out.
The embarrassment of falling over for no reason.
Going in the Chalet to have a hot cup of cocoa.
Seeing how fast you can go without pushing.
The chair lift.
Catching mega air off walls.
Sliding to a stop at the bottom of the hill.
Slaloming down steep runs.
Seeing how long I can stay at the top
when they call, "Last run."
Making up new trails and runs.
Snow spray people who wipe out.
A starry sky on a cool winter night.
A fresh snowfall on the hill.
Going home to warm up next to a fire.
--Paul Schroepfer

Twice we have called Roger Caras for an interview. I had called his ABC television office and requested his cooperation. He readily consented and all that was to be agreed on was the date and time. Cooperation through the administration was, as always in projects such as these, no problem. We used the principal's conference phone so that everyone in class could hear easily. Each student had a question, a question that had been a part of a class lesson on interviewing. It was easy, the day of the phone call to Caras, to have individuals come to the phone and ask their questions. All were interested in his answers. In a small school, a project like this receives a lot of attention. It helps to promote the class. Sometimes the calls (we also called Allan Eckert) receive notice in the local paper. But, most important to remember is the ease with which a project like this can be carried out in a school where everyone knows and trusts everyone else. The $50.00 phone bill is not a bureaucratic issue.

A third novel used is the widely known ***Wild Goose, Brother Goose*** (Grosset, 1969) by Wisconsin author Mel Ellis. The novel forces students to look at any animal's existence during hunting season. Students are also impressed that Ellis was fired from his associate editor position at ***Field and Stream*** for writing this book. An interesting follow-up of Duke, the goose in the novel, can be gained by reading the Ellis "Little Lakes" column in ***Wisconsin Sportsman*** .

The question of what does an animal do and where does he go when we can't see him leads to a combination field trip, writing assignment. For several years we have taken a 70 mile bus trip to Horicon Wildlife Refuge, the setting for much of Ellis' book. There we tramp the trails, go to goose blinds, identify ducks, climb observation towers, all in an effort to understand more of the novel and observe the marsh. One year we had a guided pontoon tour of part of the marsh. Over fifty students are released from classes for the day, calling for cooperation from all staff. Several times the principal has accompanied the trip. The small staff at a small school helps make the day easy to organize.

Form poems from the novel were enhanced by the field trip. While there have been a variety of assignments, these short, newspaper format question poems--who, what, where, when, why--are effective.

Duke

Just when
Duke, the goose, thought
he would die on the pond,

He layed his head on the rat's house
and slept.
--Scott Witt

A lone gander
Flying low
over Sheboygan
a cold winter afternoon
looking for a friend
--Charles Kutchenriter

I sat in a blind
waiting for geese
hidden by marsh grasses
letting the autumn breeze chill me
I must shoot a goose
--Rick Pingel

Since Ellis deals with wardens and violators in his novel, we have an area game warden as a guest speaker to sections of this class. Again, in a small community, the warden is very willing to participate with the school. He is known by many students as a warden and this gives them a chance to know him as a person. Having the warden requires more staff cooperation. Students are dismissed from one hour of class because the warden's presentation is two hours. A warden is an important resource because he stresses the significance of writing in his work. After a presentation of slides which illustrate the variety in his job, he discusses his case reports. He stresses, above all, detailed accuracy. Each student writes a report following the warden's class visit. The report is complete with names, violations, warden's (themselves) apprehension, all writing while using county maps for name and place details. Again, the rural setting of our community enhances the assignment.

Using the Foxfire approach is also easy in a rural community. One year each student had to interview someone about a past hunting experience. Many did relatives, some did neighbors, but all found the experience fun. We discussed questioning techniques, and then the students had three weeks to gather their information. We interviewed during the deer season so that the stories were tinged with the present excitement. One such story follows:

My Dad, the Hunter

He's about five foot six and build rather stocky. He's very strong in mind and body, has brown hair, rough face, whisker stubs, and a mind of his own. Sometimes it's easy to tell when he's had a hard day; he's as grumpy as a grizzly bear who hasn't ate for three days.

He's smart, courteous, strong, caring, and often foolish. He likes to see people do things for themselves or at least try. He won't give up on you; he can make you so mad at times that you'll do something you wouldn't even have attempted before.

Occasionally he might bend a law or two but you rarely catch him in the act. He's about as lucky at hunting, as "The Fonz" is with women on "Happy Days." When hunting season is approaching you can't even sense that he could be a hunter, but on that Friday night before season, WATCH OUT! Because when he starts rolling, there ain't no stopping him.

First comes the clothes which we packed away on the shelves from the season before. He gets out his favorite cap with the Elmer Fudd muffs on top. Then comes his blaze orange coat with blood stains from other kills he has achieved and then his shell vest.

Next comes the knife, some shells, (of which he always brags he needs only two, one for the big buck for him, and one for the one he'll let me tag), his six foot rope, his sorel boots, rubber boots, and of course, his good old twelve gauge automatic.

5:30, Saturday morning finally arrives. On goes the clothes, long johns and all. Out to the garage he goes and cranks up his old 68 Ford truck which goes through motors about as fast as sand through a sieve.

We arrived at the wood about five minutes before opening time. Dad told me to set up on the edge of the woods and he would walk back a ways into the woods. He also mentioned he'd come back up to the truck for a cup of coffee.

Time went by and so did the does for which I, of course, didn't have a permit to shoot. So I waited, and waited, and waited. Until finally it was time to take a leak. I had been holding it for some time, so I set my gun down, and walked a few feet to take care of things. I just happened to turn my head and look back when out of the woods came an eight-point buck. I eased my zipper up quietly and took a step toward my gun.

The deer stopped and just looked at me. I quietly picked up my gun and pulled it to my shoulder. The deer still just stood there and looked at me. Then, just as I was about to put the bead on him, I saw a white tail flopping in the air. "Kaboom!" I fired a host with a Hail Mary. But all I saw was tree limbs.

Just a few seconds after I shot I heard another single shot go off. Then someone started yelling my name and told me to get my ass over there!

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So I ran over to where I had heard the voice and to my surprise, there was my dad just standing there holding his gun and looking towards a hill just over the dredge ditch. "Go over there and see what you can find," the smart alec yells.

Well, of course I would get the dirty job of crossing the ditch which was about three feet deep. I got lucky myself because there was a bunch of rocks and dead branches to cross on.

When I arrived over the hill, I found, you guessed it, a deer as dead as a door knob with a bullet hole dead center in the neck. "You got it!" I yelled. "Now get over here and gut it!"

Then he told me how he came upon this poor deer just running to him to be shot, but the funniest part was that he never got his fingers out of his mitten. "I just dropped my gun down on my hip and waited for him to cross my path," Dad said.

Well whether you believe it or not, that's the way I saw it happen. And if you don't believe me, just talk to the guy who shot the deer, my "Dad."

--Randy Lorge

When these stories were completed, we began assembling our best writing for a book. There would be one book from two sections of "Outdoor Literature." The graphics teacher cooperated with the printing and the binding, the administration cooperated on the cost, and the students benefitted. Each one anticipated the day the book was to be published. And, when it was, and each class member received one, the book was read. For three days, students from class, and not from class, could be seen reading. In a small school, the news travels fast. Everyone knew everyone else's story, essay or poem. The feeling of "oneness" would not have been evident in a bigger school.

The class remains a success. Could I have even tried it in a larger school? Would students have been as interested. I do know that in a school our size, the cooperation allows an ease to organize, forces accountability, enhances community involvement and makes resources readily available. All of this transfers to a lot of pride in accomplishment.

Of course there are disadvantages in a small, rural school. With five English teachers, three math teachers, one chemistry teacher, three social studies teachers, course offerings are limited and, with a small student body there are times when not enough students enroll in a class so that it may be taught. However, an innovative program, led by our superintendent of schools, has helped to make a small school big. He investigated using fiber optic lines of the local phone company to initiate an Interactive Distance Learning Project. When completed, this project linked our school to six others in an area of 100 square miles. This linkage makes for two-way visual and oral communication, so, other than a teacher not being in a classroom physically, it is a regular classroom setting. Students from our school can ask questions of the instructor or of students from another classroom and get immediate response. Assignments are faxed on a daily basis.

Each of these schools is smaller than ours so they faced the same problems with course offerings. But for the cost of approximately one teacher's annual salary as an annual cost, all school boards, administrators, teachers and students are enthusiastic about the benefits. Willing students are enrolled in Advanced Placement English, Psychology, and Calculus as well as Spanish and German. Next year, more course offerings are available. Also, smaller schools may have an easier time meeting state-mandated educational standards. In-service programs for teachers allow schools to get a further return on their $100,000 initial investment. Speakers from one school may be seen, heard and interacted with on the monitor of another school with no travel expense and shared costs for the speaker.

The team effort of the school board, administration and teaching staff, because of accessibility that a small school maintains, can bring other benefits that are lacking in a larger system. It is not uncommon to know board members personally and certainly not uncommon for teachers to call board members to discuss ideas. Any teacher may walk into the Superintendent's office, the Director of Instruction's office, or a building principal's office to discuss ideas. The betterment of education, then, receives direct and primary focus.

As a result, in addition to innovative courses and innovative technology, are other benefits that come from a team approach to do what is right to enhance education. Teachers attend professional conferences at the district, state, and national level. Every effort is made to encourage this attendance. And, it is largely at District expense. I recall being at a Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English convention in Green Bay a number of years ago when a Pooley Foundation Award was to be presented to a teacher from the western part of the state. She was not present. The presenter read a note stating that the district where she taught would not release her unless she paid for her own substitute. How different it is when the district works as a team.

When all involved for the improvement in education can see a return on an investment such as attending conferences, education can only improve. This attitude is easier to develop in a system where everyone can communicate willingly.

Accountability through the fact that no one is anonymous is evident in more ways than in teaching an innovative class. This accountability can come without pressure, again a benefit in a small district. Two examples will illustrate.

In 1986 the English department incorporated a writing assessment in grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. The results were not flattering. Despite this outcome, rather than place blame, the board, administration, and teachers chose to improve. The district spent $1500 in 1987 to sponsor three teachers to participate in the Central Wisconsin Writing Project. They have continued this support each year. In-service speakers were brought to the district to emphasize the teaching of writing to all teachers, English and non-English. Essay tests were emphasized by building principals as was an essay assignment each semester from all teachers, including art, physical education, and music. The English curriculum was revised, incorporating sound writing-theory practices. A writing lab was established and a half-time position created to manage personnel, record student use, maintain a budget and, of course, work with students. In return, the district was promised improved results. After three years the writing assessment showed marked improvement. After six years the district attained a level of writing which had been set as a goal in 1987. No teacher had been evaluated negatively if his/her students had not scored well on the assessment. By maintaining a personal interest, rather than being interested in numbers from an assessment only, the district realized a return on their investment.

Another example of cooperation occurred following the incorporation of the state's first third-grade reading test. Again, our students did not perform as well as we would have liked. Again, rather than place blame, a team effort ensued. The district paid all third-grade teachers, the reading specialists, and the language arts coordinator for two eight-hour days to devise a plan for improvement. The superintendent, director of instruction, and elementary principal also attended. All worked together in identifying problems and in determining solutions. In each successive year, results on the state reading test improved.

There are many other examples of innovative classes, innovative technology, and cooperation. A small school will only be small when the minds that operate it are small. In a rural school, no one gets lost, no matter what level in the system. The willingness of staff to work together, a direct result of seeing one another each day, allows education to grow.

I don't know if I would be teaching "Outdoor Lit" in a big school, if I would be attending NCTE conferences, if I would be playing cards with my principal and fellow staff members. I know that I'll never know. Not even for $10,000.

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Teaching Scientific Vocabulary:
A Joint Venture for Rural Schools

by V. Pauline Hodges
Forgan High School
Forgan, Oklahoma

Teachers in rural schools have a unique opportunity to work together as team teachers, or at least team planners, to use an interdisciplinary approach in helping students learn content subject matter. One of these subject areas that needs such an effort is science since the vocabulary of science is difficult for most students. When I returned to the classroom as a reading/English teacher for At-Risk students. I was reminded that for these students, science vocabulary is overwhelming. Fortunately, I was able to work cooperatively with the science teacher in my small rural school to develop strategies to help both of us teach more effectively. Three years of application of these methods have proven to make life in science class more successful for At-Risk students, and, at the same time, for all students. An added benefit is that my At-Risk students in reading class see some purpose and meaning for learning all those hard words!

> Science Teacher A: My students can't seem to understand the textbook. I don't know what to do!
>
> Science Teacher B: Well, I have the same problem in my classes.
>
> Science Teacher A: Perhaps the readability levels of the texts are too high.
>
> Science Teacher B: I agree, but science has a unique and technical vocabulary. We can't reasonably change that. That's the basis for science.(1)

The "unique and technical" vocabulary that is the basis for science is also often the basis for difficulty in reading the sciences. Scientific vocabulary not only causes the readability level of scientific texts to appear higher than the reading level of the grade for which the text was intended.(2) but it also often intimidates students. Thus, for classroom teachers to teach science adequately, they must have an effective strategy for teaching the unique vocabulary of the discipline. It is also to be hoped that such a teaching of vocabulary will help to reduce the students' anxiety relating to reading assignments.

While the use and repetition of technical terms in scientific texts are often the distinguishing factors cited when criticizing the high readability levels of intermediate grade science texts, the vocabulary problems are not limited to the technical concept vocabulary. In some scientific text samples, an understanding of the vocabulary is not central to understanding the concept being presented. In some instances, the technical vocabulary could be replaced with nonsense words without greatly hindering the understanding of what is being explained.(3) Ignoring the technical vocabulary would not be considered a viable alternative to understanding the vocabulary, so some effort must be made to help the student understand the words with which they are wrangling.

The vocabulary with which readers of a scientific text are likely to have difficulty can be separated into three categories: technical words, technical support words, and non-technical words.(2) Non-technical words are common words that may cause the reader difficulty because of either unfamiliarity, or word length.(3) While the reader's difficulty with non-technical vocabulary may impede his understanding of the text, a detailed discussion of methods for teaching common vocabulary is beyond the scope of this paper.

The importance of helping students to gain a thorough understanding of scientific vocabulary derives from a direct relationship between comprehension and vocabulary. At the upper elementary level and above, it has been estimated that 50 to 80 percent of science class learning comes from reading.(1) The teaching of science needs to go beyond a mere mastery of factual information, as to teach only the findings of science is to teach an illusion of scientific knowledge. In the face of the crisis of the sinking science achievement scores of American students, it is the responsibility of the science teacher to help the student to develop skills necessary for learning and applying scientific concepts. Helping students to develop strategies for deciphering scientific vocabulary is one means toward that goal.

A science teacher's first concern when attempting to teach scientific vocabulary should be his or her own command of the technical vocabulary. A teacher who avoids the vocabulary, or who uses it haphazardly, is not going to motivate students to exert any effort in studying science words. Giving students personal insights into how she, the teacher, successfully learned the vocabulary, or pointing out certain words with which she once had difficulty, is one way of motivating the students, as well as letting them know that she is dedicated to vocabulary mastery.(4)

Before the student ever encounters the first new and unfamiliar technical term, there are several things that should have been done to dissipate the alienness of the word. Rather than simply turning the students loose on a new text, some time should be devoted to helping the students acquire a strategy for attacking the reading assignment. A brief walkthrough of the reading assignment will eliminate some word frustration later. At first, this should be a guided walkthrough. With time, the students should be able to do their own walkthrough, to get an idea of the total picture of the reading assignment, before they ever begin reading. What is the title of the chapter? What are the titles of the subheadings? What is shown in the pictures and diagrams? By answering these and similar questions, the student should be able to get a vague idea of what the reading assigment is about,(5) and thereby have some clue as to what the new vocabulary may be referring.

Many well-written science texts will provide a definition and pronunciation immediately after introducing a new word or concept. However, some students only half glance at their reading and slide over the definition and pronunciation.(4) When the word appears again in the next paragraph, they have already forgotten what it means. It should be impressed upon students that they cannot expect to learn science if they attempt to read the assignments in the same manner, or at the same rate, that they read their English assignments. It has been suggested that in reading a science such as physics, the reader should read at perhaps one-tenth of his average rate.(4) The concept here is that, in reading the sciences, the only way to save time is to take time.

Now that the student has scanned the reading assignment beforehand and is no longer trying to speedread the text (ideally), there will still be words that the student will not recognize. Perhaps the text publisher assumed the word to be in the vocabulary of someone at the particular grade level of the text, or perhaps the student has forgotten the word from an earlier encounter. This is the point at which the student needs effective word attack strategies.

The first and most preferable method of attacking new vocabulary is to search for context clues. If the student did an overview of the reading assignment, he should have an idea of what sort of concept the word refers. The student should look next at how the word is being applied. Are there synonyms or a restatement in more common language? Is there additional information about the concept that allows for inference? Is there an extended discussion of the concept that attempts to establish a particular meaning for the word?(6) Context clues can be divided into ten categories: experience clues, comparison or contrast clues, explanation through example clues, direct explanation, mood or tone clues, summary or restatement clues, synonym clues, familiar expression or language experience clues, words-in-a-series clues, and inference clues.(4) No one text is likely to make wide use of all the available types of context clues. Being familiar with the style of the text being used will enable the teacher to alert the student to the particular type of context clue that the writer uses most often.

If context clues fail to identify the word, the student needs to be able to go on to an organized method of word attack. The first step in word attack is to break the word down into more easily manageable pieces.(4) Next, examine the pieces. Sometimes there is an easy root word with a long, forbidding word. Once all the prefixes and suffixes have been sorted through, the meaning can be gleaned from a knowledge of the simple root word. Noncompound words can be similarly attacked. By breaking a difficult polysyllabic word into a less formidable single syllable, a reasonable approximation of the pronunciation can be obtained. Thus, if the word is a contextually defined concept, the reader will be able to cope more easily with the word on its subsequent appearances. Also, by breaking a word down to smaller syllables and pronouncing it, the student may recognize the word as one he has heard before, but had not seen before.

One method of breaking words into smaller parts involved searching for Greek and Latin roots. This is a particularly effective strategy for science vocabulary. A survey of six science textbook series showed that 74 percent of the scientific terms contained either Greek or Latin roots.(7) The teaching of Greek and Latin word parts can be an effective enough approach to teaching scientific vocabulary as to merit their receiving a detailed study. Since so many science terms contain Greek or Latin word elements, it follows that teaching root elements of scientific terms is an especially effective technique for improving student scientific vocabularies.(7)

When all else fails, look up the word. However, before reaching for the dictionary, the student should first check the index or glossary, if the book contains one.(5) In addition to lessening the distraction of having to look up a word in the dictionary, looking in the glossary will likely present the student with only the definition needed. Thus, the student will not be faced with the dilemma of sorting through several definitions to try to find one that is

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appropriate. When resorting to the dictionary, one can use several guidelines as appropriate times to turn to the dictionary. Use the dictionary when a precise meaning is required; the word is a key word crucial to full comprehension; context clues suggest several possible meanings; the nearby words are unfamiliar; and, when the word has been encountered several times, and is realized to be one, the knowledge of which, will be useful in future reading.(4)

Scientific vocabulary acquisition is an area in which some prior planning by the teacher could greatly alleviate the potential frustration of the students. Pre-teaching potentially troublesome words can take the agony out of reading for many students. One method of identifying words that need to be pre-taught is to scan the text for words that are highlighted by italic or boldface type.(5) These are often the important new concepts of reading. Another method is to have a small group of students, perhaps an advanced grouping, pre-read the assignment and prepare a list of words they found difficult.(6) Many of the methods used for deciphering unfamiliar vocabulary in context also applies to pre-teaching vocabulary. When pre-teaching vocabulary, use the following guidelines:

1. Introduce the new word in context.
2. Spotlight an easy root within a long, forbidding word.
3. Reduce difficult polysyllables to easy-to-manage syllables.
4. Call attention to accented syllables.
5. Tap the student experiences.
6. Pre-teach multi-meaning terms.
7. Help insure retention.
8. Help students move toward independence.(4)

Once the student has grasped the meaning of a new word, the final problem is that of retention. When learning a new word, writing and saying the word will help with retention. The teacher should write and say the word, then have the students write and say the word as well. Having regular vocabulary tests, or regularly including a vocabulary section on tests, helps retention. Making vocabulary as the basis of learning or drill games helps retention in two ways. In addition to the exposure necessary for the learning game to be played, the novelty of the game as a break from the usual classroom routine helps with retention. Games can take such forms as crossword puzzles, anagrams, or bingo.(8) Another method to enhance retention is to require students to keep vocabulary cards showing the word, pronunciation, definition, and usage. An alternative method to this would be to have the students record the same information in their notebooks, especially if a "divided-page" format is used for the students' notebooks.(4)

Helping students to acquire skills for learning scientific vocabulary will not only help them in their immediate classwork, but should be designed so that the student will be able to apply these skills to future readings in science. As such, the thrust of teaching science should be to help the students gain methods for future learning and inquiry.

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A Medley of Writings

by Beth Hunnicutt
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Fishing: a Metaphor

Every spring I shed the winter-crusted skin of my daily life and go fishing with my family. What began as one four-member family in a tent has expanded over the years to several related families in RV's, but we still sleep and eat and commune at the headwaters of the playful Deschutes River.

From there, we pile into our rigs and bump overland, squeezing through the jackpines until we reach a spot where three streams tumble out of the mountains and sashay side by side across the pumice plains and boggy meadows.

The adults in charge of toddlers piggy-back them across a bog to the banks of a two-foot-wide creek where they help the tots dangle worms in front of the hungry brook trout that lurk in the hole at each bend. The older children and young teens can fish at a large hole nearby. There, they learn the patience needed to lure the trout to their bait, and they can easily catch their limits in an afternoon of independence and adult-free fun. The rest of us spread out along the other stream, watching for deer and elk and the gigantic sandhill cranes as we go.

With the sun warming my face and hands and the bird songs warming my soul, I work the stream, casting to the far bank and letting my bait drift across downstream. I watch for overhanging banks, willows, and downed logs where brookies like to rest. Every new stretch of water is exciting: "There's sure to be a fish in that dark stretch of water, or in that deeper hole," I tell myself. If the fish aren't taking my worms, there's always something else to try: a bigger, fresher worm or a periwinkle or my favorite little Panther Martin lure.

Robins, tanagers, larks, jays, sparrows, swallows, dippers, and crowd keep me company. If I'm lucky, I'll hear the clacking call of the cranes or see their huge silhouettes as they fly overhead. My feet are surrounded by wild strawberry blossoms, buttercups, and jack-in-the-pulpits and my nose is filled with the pungency of pine.

In the back of my mind is the knowledge that someone I love is not far ahead of me on the stream and someone else behind.

If I catch fish, I'm happy. If I don't catch fish, I'm happy. It's not the fish that make the day magic; it's the fishing.

Rural Marginalization

"Do you have indoor plumbing?" a Boston saleselerk asked as she checked my Oregon driver's license only four years ago. I was incensed. Hadn't she heard that the West was tamed? Did she think I lived on the set of a Western movie?

Last year at a statewide conference, I presented my analysis of changes in recent fiction by women, using Gordimer's ***July's People***, Atwood's ***The Handmaid's Tale***, and Mukherjee's ***Jasmine*** as a base. I noted such commonalities as the lack of a name or changing names of the protagonists, vague or shifting points of view, temporal manipulation, and lack of resolution. Afterwards, one of the organizers of the conference commented that he was surprised that "there are people doing good work out there." Out there? Out where? Again, I was angry. Did he believe that only city people read and think?

Offred, the protagonist of Margaret Atwood's ***The Handmaid's Tale***, remembers that in her past (our present) women lived in the margins, at the edges of the pages, where they were not considered a real part of the story that is life. Their marginalization by the dominant culture kept them from developing a full voice in the affairs of men and ultimately destroyed their opportunity to participate in society. We rural teachers are in the same danger; we are marginalized by many who consider themselves elite, somehow better or more informed than those of us who have chosen to spend our careers in small schools.

Atwood shows us, however, that by their reluctance to speak up and by their willingness to accept the position assigned them, the women were complicit in their own marginalization. We ruralites who, like Atwood's women, are too busy or too shy to make our ideas and ourselves known, must make the time and develop the courage to participate. It is imperative that we contribute to the professional dialogue about changes in education, about reading, about literary criticism and school choice and the canon and . . . .

It may be true that synonyms for "rural" are "crude, rough, and unsophisticated," as my thesaurus says, but we country folk are not stupid

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and need not be passive. If we uncomplainingly continue to allow federal and state officials and politicians to mandate educational changes which do not apply to us and cannot be implemented in our situations, we are "rubes." If we remain too insecure to publish our ideas, we are "bumpk'ns." And if we neglect to model such participatory behavior for our students, we proscribe boundaries for their lives, boundaries which may keep them in the margins of the pages of life.

Book Review of *Dreamers and Desperadoes*

Craig Lesley and Katheryn Stavrakis, eds.
Laurel/Dell, New York, 1993

Lesley and Stavrakis have collected short stories from writers "of the American West," which they define as anything west of the Mississippi. All fifty of the stories are truly contemporary, dating from 1986 at the earliest, and most of them are from 1990 or later.

The stories range in topic from Bigfoot to riding the rails to relationships, crime, emotions, and loss. Although the collection is praiseworthy, it falls into the post-modernist trap of valuing topics from the negative aspects of life. If we were to take them as representative of Western life, we would have to conclude that most Westerners suffer greatly and have little comic relief and lighthearted fun.

Percival Everett writes about a child in an abusive situation with no apparent relief in "Cry About a Nickel." Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and Lawson Fusao Inada address the problems of displacement. David James Duncan and Richard Ford discuss aspects of death and loss, and Amy Tan includes estrangement in the relationship between a mother and her daughter.

Who could fail to appreciate Alex Kuo's understated imagery, Ivan Doig's description, or Ursula LeGuin's splendid irony?

The greatest strength of the anthology is its balance. The editors have included not only men and women of various backgrounds and ethnicity, but have also succeeded in blending writers of all levels of experience, including newcomers.

From Stavrakis and Lesley's introduction to Terry Tempest Williams' cryptic allegory, "Buried Poems," ***Dreamers and Desperadoes*** provides nuggets of mental nutrition.

Booklist

Sometimes finding books with female protagonists is difficult, especially books which rural students like. Here are three fairly recent books which have been successful for me.

1. Crew, Linda. ***Children of the River***. Dell, New York, 1989. ISBN 0-440-21022.

Sundara, a teenage immigrant tries to be both Cambodian and American. She is attracted to Jonathan, a football star, yet she knows that Khmer girls aren't to talk to boys alone. Sundara must deal with guilt over the death of an infant cousin in her care, and she cannot find out whether her family in Cambodia have survived. Students will learn much about Cambodian culture and about how it feels to be treated as "Other."

2. Gloss, Molly. ***The Jump-Off Creek***. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1989. ISBN 0-395-55600[illegible]-2.

Alternating fictional diary entries with chapters in omniscient author point of view, Gloss deftly integrates character, landscape, and history in this story of the pioneer homesteader Lydia Bennett Sanderson. Lydia is alone, independent, resourceful, and courageous, but not unfeminine. She plants, puts up hay, splits shingles, and takes care of all the chores other homesteaders do to build a life in northeastern Oregon. Gloss intended to create a Cather-like character. She's done it.

3. Wren, M.K. ***A Gift Upon the Shore***. Ballantine, New York, 1990. ISBN 0-345-37088-0.

This post-holocaust novel emphasizes strong relationships. Through reliance on each other and their tiny farm, the characters survive "The End," a nuclear attack which has caused a dark nuclear winter and a "blind summer" with dangerous ultraviolet light. Wren also employs the alternating diary and omniscient author point of view, which enables her to tell the story both as it is lived and as it is remembered. The book's tone, its setting, and its themes of women's independence, strength, story telling, and relationships make readers ponder long after they've finished reading.

A Community-History Project

by Marilyn Smith
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Ithaca, Michigan

Well, I was born in a small town
And I live in a small town
Prob'ly die in a small town
Oh, those small communities

John Mellencamp's song "Small Town" captures the rural essence that still exists in Ithaca, Michigan. Surrounded by flat, fertile acres, the rural community has maintained generations based on farming. However, this heritage had been largely overlooked until a memorial fund established in 1982 opened an avenue for exploration into the history of the community. Through their research and writing of a local historical site, my students have developed a knowledge and appreciation of their rural heritage and environment.

The opportunity to research and write about our community offers a wide variety of experiences to create authentic writing. The seniors in my honors writing course begin to explore available resources early in the semester by interviewing someone over the age of 60. This develops experience and a comfort zone for interviewing that will serve them later in their research. Additionally, during the interviews they learn of places and events they may not have ever noticed. Students begin to look at empty buildings, facades, cornerstones, Centennial Farm emblems, and street signs for clues to the history of the area.

The research begins with an awareness session. Field trips to the downtown district, the county courthouse, the county poor farm, and, of course, the local historical museum create interest and open eyes to what might be developed into an essay of historical significance (the guidelines of the memorial fund). This term is generously interpreted, and proof comes from age, uniqueness and importance to the area. Students see the round barn, the octagon house, which once were merely landmarks, as structures representing an era. County road signs indicate the names of founding pioneers and give life to what was the ordinary.

These discoveries add a special ownership to the project. Students excitedly share their findings. Jennifer, who lives in a house on Jeffrey Street, named after the founder of Ithaca, discovered that Mrs. Jeffrey had lived for years in the very same house Jennifer now lives in. Scott, researching an unusual log cabin memorial in the local cemetery, discovered not only the 90-year-old sister of the deceased but his own relationship to the little girl who had died at the beginning of this century. County hamlets that never existed for my students come to life with schools, churches, and businesses. They see that cheesemaking, brick manufacturing, tub manufacturing, and sawmills all prospered at one time and that Czechoslovakian immigrants still maintain social clubs and churches that reflect their heritage. All around the students are possibilities that they begin to discover.

The students branch out and take the assignment to the community, which has been very supportive. The senior citizens are eager and willing to help and point students to sources. Materials are not available to students in the conventional manner. Books and magazines do not give details and lengthy descriptions, so students are forced to discover and integrate information. Interviews and scraps of information become key components of understanding the history of the student's topic. I have witnessed the delight of two girls who brought handwritten ledgers from the 1800's into the classroom. Unearthed in the attic of the township hall, these documents were rather ragged and covered with animal droppings; however, they became prized resources.

Students begin to recognize a sense of the past and the worth of their efforts in saving a bit of it. Our area suffered a devastating flood in 1986, and in 1989 approximately one quarter of the business district succumbed to fire. Fortunately, the structures and the areas that sustained losses had been documented by students, and, thus, a bit of them still remains.

The final product of this exploration, the essay, is shared with community groups and with resource people. A copy of the essay is kept on file in the school library; this file has become a valuable resource itself. Also, students are asked by various groups to present their work. One student led a tour of his researched farm for a group of third graders. Others have used part of their papers at funerals as tributes to individuals and their lives within the community. Cash prizes are awarded to the essays judged the best by a panel of three community members.

Whatever the outcome of the paper, the outcome of the experience is positive. Students are drawn closer to members of the community and see the "small town" of which Mellencamp sings, and perhaps they feel as he does: *"No, I cannot forget where it is that I come from/ I cannot forget the people who love me."*

Winning for the Small Schools

by Nathan James ("Jim") Weate
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Lamoni, Iowa

"Let's win this for all the small schools that never had a chance to get here," Merle said in ***Hoosiers*** (Orion Pictures, Hemdale Film Corporation, 1986) just before he and his teammates went on the floor to play in and win the 1952 Indiana boys' high school state championship game. But, it couldn't have been said without the efforts of the coach, Norman Dale, to restructure the way the Hickory Huskers basketball team functioned on the court.

Similar to the on-court restructuring which Coach Dale created in basketball, school restructuring can and should be done. No doubts exist that our nation's schools have delivery systems, physical plants, professional personnel, curriculums, goals, and outcomes that need improvement.

Small, rural schools have restructuring needs every bit as urgent as urban schools, although any national restructuring is not likely to touch upon rural school needs but will be geared more toward large districts. Those of us involved in small, rural schools need to be pointing out what the needs are for rural restructuring and how these restructuring efforts can be achieved. These needs stem from a massive government/business coalition over the past decades which has left the rural American subsociety financially impoverished and which threatens the social fabric of this subsociety.

Political and economic power has resided, for many years, in the cities. This has created a situation which has been highly detrimental to the rural areas. We saw the anti-trust suits of the Theodore Roosevelt era challenge the monopolies and oligopolies of that day, and we have prided ourselves as a nation on a couple of things: first, taking action against businesses which have controlled the selling of goods at inflated prices and, second, shielding small businesses from unfair competition.

An equally shameful control has existed in price fixing of farm commodities, every bit as damaging to the family farmer as the trusts from the John D. Rockefeller days up through the recent airline price fixing suit were to the American public and small businesses. The family farmer has been and remains fiercely independent, so the thousands of them have not banded together for selling purposes against the few large food processors. Yet, when corn sold for $2.40 per bushel in 1972, then sold in 1992 for--guess what --$2.40 or less per bushel, unfair advantage seems to have been taken. Rural communities and rural schools have received this discriminatory treatment by urban society, which depends, without recognizing it, upon the very rural society it pillages.

Since large businesses control government policy-making, own notes held against mortgaged farms, and both sell the supplies at high prices which are needed to boost yields and buy the cheap products of large harvests at low prices, changes need to be made. Jefferson felt the common people as a group were the only protection against takeover by an elite; Hamilton believed common people to be too turbulent and changing, so he favored a government with the stability which the rich and well-born would give. Hamiltonian democracy is winning out by government being handed over to large business interests. These large businesses, after they obtain foreclosed farms at low prices, put the farms into their system. The same farms then bring the agricultural giant a larger return on subsidies than the small farmer got since subsidies benefit corporate farms most.

Leveraged buy-outs, changed legislation benefitting the wealthy, tax protection for the corporation and the wealthy corporate official, corporate takeovers, and the shifting of losses to the public has become the rule in the corporate world; similarly, agriculture has seen the small family farm suffer at the expense of large agribusiness concerns. Of the people still in farming, debt-ridden farmers, sharecroppers, tenants, and renters have become increasingly the rule. This is not seen as a problem by those in Washington or on Wall Street since the promise is that vertical integration of agribusiness supposedly will create lower food prices in the long run.

The true cost of food is not just what we pay directly at the store; the actual price includes the cost of subsidies, farm foreclosures, soil erosion, and many other hidden costs, not to mention the health problems created by hazardous chemicals and machinery, all of which are escalated by the large agribusiness concerns. The great and growing tragedy is that as the simple life of farming in the small-farmer tradition is eliminated by the complex farming style of the corporate farm, the seeming progress will sneak up on us and deal us a mortal blow since a monster is created by violating environmental principles, violations which the family farmer did not embrace.

But, farm foreclosures are only part of the problem. Another major part is what is happening in the small towns of America, for as the farms are gobbled up by corporations, fewer families from the farms remain to support the grocery stores, schools, governmental agencies, churches, newspapers, filling stations, clothing shops, and hardware stores in the towns. As a result, the towns present faces of plywood rather than greetings of glass. Towns vie against each other for industry which is seeking to escape the urban areas since unions have insisted upon reasonable wages and benefits. Rural areas become so desperate that compensation at or near the minimum wage with no benefits is offered by the company and accepted by the laborers. Soon, a rural ghetto, every bit as harmful but far less visible than the urban ghetto, is created.

The rural ghetto presents problems for its dwellers of housing, education, health care, nutrition, hunger, and political power, just like an urban ghetto. Of even greater damage than the effects of homelessness, hunger, and other physical problems are the psychological and emotional devastations which occur to the people. Today's rural ghettos bear resemblances to Upton Sinclair's ***The Jungle*** in their physical, psychological, and emotional damage. (See Osha Gray Davidson, *Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto*, page 130.)

A startling fact is that many rural poor who work full time remain below the poverty line. What is more, the vast majority of rural poor are not unemployed but have some job, either part-time or full-time. The true impact of Jeffersonian versus Hamiltonian democracy begins to sink in as the plight of the rural poor is weighed. Louis Brandeis, Supreme Court Justice from 1916 to 1939 and one of this country's greatest social reformers, observed: "We can have democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both" (cited in Davidson, page 167). Yet, it is such concentration of wealth which crushes the rural areas.

The colonial-system attitude which metropolitan industry has had toward the rural "colonies" must cease. The need for a strong agrarian base is becoming ever clearer in a world-wide perspective, yet this is being ignored in our own country where industry and government continue to act in collusion against the public rather than recognizing their need to serve the public.

About 150 years ago John Stuart Mill expressed the idea that, "Men are men before they are lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians." No recognition of this phase of education appears in national restructuring efforts, and this is the forte of rural education. Rather than cognitive goals, we need some goals that emphasize kinder, gentler schools for a kinder, gentler society.

Even state requirements work against rural schools in many instances, using up precious time and resources of teachers and administrators rather than contributing to learning. Somehow, state departments of education have not grasped that their responsibilities are to facilitate local districts in their work by promoting diversity and experimentation rather than policing for exacting standards or calling for uniformity and needless proliferation.

First of all, rural schools should be evaluated not in terms of how many course offerings they list or whether they have separate administrators and counselors for both elementary and secondary levels. Rather, a school system should be permitted to set up goals which emphasize affective and conative (the will to learn) as well as cognitive learnings.

As an example of how state requirements can hinder, several states require all school districts, regardless of size, to maintain three full-time administrators--a superintendent, an elementary principal, and a secondary principal--yet a school nurse is optional even for districts distant from medical services. The obvious result is that arbitrary state requirements come before student needs in such instances. This indiscriminate mandate is not the only one that needs changing.

Standardized tests, if they are going to be used to evaluate student and school performance, should stress higher order thinking skills rather than cognitive recall items, for rural schools can achieve great successes in higher order thinking skills.

Also, rural schools teach affective learnings much more than urban schools. My wife and I were amazed on a trip to New Zealand in 1988 to see newspapers in an open box with an open can fastened to the side for people to place money for the newspapers they purchased. This was true even in Auckland, a city of two million people. How different from our system of inserting the correct change so that the enclosed item can be reached. Yet, in many rural communities home doors remain unlocked, car keys are left in the ignition, and school lockers have no locks on them.

Maybe if these learnings were measurable, rural educators could have their successes counted. Counting such outcomes as a success in a rural district is but one change in procedures on state and national evaluations that is needed.

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And as we achieve successes in these kinds of learnings which small schools can do best at teaching, the cognitive learnings which national restructuring efforts call for will not diminish but will be accomplished concurrent with the affective and conative learnings.

Diminished younger populations, especially those who are school age, and steadily growing numbers of elderly cause bond issues for buildings to go begging for votes in rural areas. The elderly who are on fixed incomes do not feel they can afford to pay for school buildings, and the entire voting populace reasons that new school buildings are not needed for such a declining enrollment. Yet, the problem of getting a favorable vote for financing bond issues could be remedied.

Incentives must be offered so that small, local businesses can give to local districts through tax dollars and contributions. Perhaps the state would receive no funding from local areas because of sales and income taxes going directly to the local area, but a necessary part of the total society could be preserved.

Some of the help we give students can't be achieved until we attain from the public greater respect for our profession and greater understanding for what we do. We need to let parents know that planning for the world's future--otherwise known as educating their children (or doing mind remodeling)--somehow must be viewed as important as telling one-liners after the evening news, hurling a spheroid at speeds approaching the dollar mark, or even thwarting shop lifters at a department store. Yet, stand-up comedians, baseball pitchers, and even security guards earn more than teachers.

A one-district-only effort must not occur. Virtually every district in the country must be involved, with no district or individual feeling, "We did it first," or "What we did was best." We must share ideas with each other; we must recognize the need for differences; we must create the educational equivalent of "The Wave." At the point where excitement for educational ideas, change, and transformation begins to develop, we can expect the public to join in with us. Magic formulas for specifics of what needs to be done do not exist, but the elixir of participation and cooperation is necessary.

If we do not become proactive by calling for changes in state educational requirements and local school district funding, our rural areas could end up being the next victims of big city problems, the same problems which have already invaded the smaller cities and are showing signs of moving into the rural areas due to societal mobility. No greater impetus can be given for restructuring than to avoid such problems.

Jefferson believed that his form of democracy, rule by the common person, could be achieved only by an educated citizenry. As they become educated, they also become more likely to be land owners and business people and more intelligent voters. More intelligent voters require that legislators be more responsible in their lawmaking. That is where teachers can figure in quite positively.

We need to do more than teach knowledge of subject matter that turns our students into complacent, compliant workers; we need to teach students how to think so that they are responsible citizens. We need to make the American public aware of the power which the average citizen can achieve when that citizen acts in concert with many other average citizens. And, we need to let the average citizen know that the anti-trust activities of the turn of the century which did away with the monopolies of Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, International Harvester, and the American Tobacco Company were occasioned because of public concern.

If we had sufficient public uprising during the coming months of 1993, leveraged buy-outs, banking scandals, irresponsibility of boards and CEO's, vertical industrial organization, unfair tax rates, unfair use of net operating losses, and unreasonable salary and benefit packages to CEO's could be controlled. We could also institute laws which would not allow corporations to be so dispassionate about and toward their employees.

Having a person making over $400,000 pay a 91 percent tax on the dollars beyond $400,000 doesn't seem any more unfair to me than restructuring a corporation so that the worker on the line has his pay reduced from $12 per hour to $6 per hour. Having a corporate executive be personally responsible for foreclosure seems no more harsh than a worker losing his position or forcing an employee to lose pension rights after 25 years with a company.

Not only would the country benefit from changes in the way corporations are handled, rural communities and rural schools would also be better off. In fact, it may be the only way of saving our rural schools.

Yes, restructuring needs to be done in the rural areas, and we rural educators should be willing to do it. We should want the educational goals to show more wisdom, however, than the goals of national restructuring efforts. And we should want restructuring to help rural schools by being less damaging to rural society. As this restructuring takes place, we can beat the big schools at their own game, winning for all fifty states and the nation. What's more, any and all

small schools that succeed will become another Hickory Huskers team, playing (and winning), "for all the small schools that never had a chance to get here."

The above article is based upon three previous articles by the writer published as "Changing for Survival" (Issue #16, Spring/Summer, 1992, pages 8-9), "Sure, we need to restructure. . . ." (Issue #17, Fall, 1992, pages 8-9), and "Can Books Start a Rural American Revolution?" (Issue #18, Winter, 1993, pages 8-9) in ***Country Teacher***, a journal of the National Rural Education Association, 230 Education Building, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523. One year's individual subscription to this magazine is $5.00.

The writer acknowledges his indebtedness for thoughts in this article to Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele's ***America: What Went Wrong?*** (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992) and especially to Osha Gray Davidson's ***Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto*** (New York: Free Press, 1990).

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